

New Career Assessment and Exploration Tools to Aid Jobseekers Announced



The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Information Network (O*NET™) team has designed a set of self-directed assessment and career exploration tools to help workers consider and plan career options, preparation, and transitions more effectively. They also are designed for use by students who are exploring the school to work transition. The tools, which will be available in early 2001, may be obtained through government agencies and through private sources who wish to incorporate them into the various career-guidance products they market.

The set of O*NET tools includes an Interest Profiler, a Work Importance Locator, and an Ability Profiler which are based on a "whole-person" concept. The tools help individuals identify their work-related interests, what they consider important on the job, and their abilities in order to explore those occupations that relate most closely to those attributes. Users of the tools may link directly to the more than 900 occupations described by the O*NET database, as well as America's Career Kit, thus making a seamless transition from assessing their interests and abilities to matching their job skills with the requirements of occupations in their local labor market.

"These assessment tools can help job seekers, workers, students, and parents better understand their interests, skills, and abilities so they successfully engage in the labor market," said Raymond L. Bramucci, assistant secretary of labor for employment and training. "Human resource managers in business settings can use these tools to help individuals manage their careers. These tools are part of the integrated services provided through One-Stop Career centers and self-help resources under the Workforce Investment Act."

The new assessment instruments will directly support service providers under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to assist individuals who are exploring career options and using information services supported through the WIA. By using these tools, career counselors and facilitators at One-Stop Centers and other service providers may broaden options and help find alternative occupations for dislocated workers, unemployment insurance recipients, and other adults and youth. The assessment tools can be used to help recognize where an individual's strengths are and where they might need to get more education and training. However, the tools are not designed for and may not be used as selection instruments, in other words, they cannot be used to select a job candidate based on the score results.

The O*NET assessment/career counseling tools were developed adhering to the highest quality standards of the American Psychological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education. The instruments were developed and tested with populations that varied in terms of race, age, gender, ethnic background, geographic location, educational background, and economic background. The tools also have been pilot tested in many different education, employment and training settings, e.g. Employment Service offices, Job Corps programs, inner city/rural/suburban schools, veterans groups,

community colleges, and universities. Developing the O*NET assessment tools was a multi-year project led by the Employment and Training Administration, working in partnership with state agencies, public and private consulting firms, workforce development organizations and the public.

A brief description of each the tools follows:

Interest Profiler

A self-assessment career exploration tool. Participants identify and learn about broad interest areas most relevant to their work-related interests by answering a series of questions. The tool helps users discover the type of work activities and tasks that they would like and find exciting on the job and identify which occupations link best with a person's primary interests. Available first quarter 2001.

Work Importance Locator

A self-assessment career exploration tool. Helps users clarify what they find most important in jobs. Participants can identify occupations included in O*NET that they are likely to find satisfying, based on the similarity between what is important to them in a job and the characteristics of the occupations. Available first quarter 2001.

Ability Profiler

An ability assessment developed for counseling and career exploration. It measures nine job-relevant abilities. Includes administration guidance and scoring software. Its customized score reports provide both scores and information to help participants understand and use their results with O*NET occupational information to assist in their career exploration and planning. Available second quarter 2001.

Specific information on each of the tools and ordering information will be available through Department of Labor's web site at www.doleta.gov/programs/onet/tools.asp during the first quarter 2001 and updated regularly as appropriate. All of the assessment tool components will be for sale through the Government Printing Office. Score Reports to help individuals interpret the assessment results, master lists of O*NET occupations related to the results, and User Guides will be available as for sale items or can be downloaded for free along with documentation and supplementary reports. These will be available in .PDF (printable) files via the Internet at the O*NET Center web site: www.onetcenter.org

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